

WHO IS SEEKING WHO?

By Todd Core

SCRIPTURE

Luke 19:1-10

“Today salvation has come to this house,” Jesus told him, “because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.” (vv. 9-10)

OBSERVATION

If you went to church as a kid or even made the VBS circuit once or twice, you probably were taught the song about “the wee little man” from scripture named Zacchaeus. He had a certain level of power and wealth in his hometown of Jericho, yet he was despised and hated because he was a tax collector which made him basically an extortioner/traitor to the Jewish people. He heard Jesus was coming through town, and Zacchaeus desperately wanted to see Him. This is where we learn the specific detail that Zacchaeus was a short man—so short in fact, he had to climb a sycamore tree just to be able to peer over the crowd to lay eyes on Jesus for himself. Astonishingly, Jesus calls him out of the tree and dines at his house. The crowd was appalled that the rabbi would associate with a man of such a filthy reputation. Then Jesus makes the missional statement that “the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.” Let’s examine a few observations from this infamous encounter:

- It is easy to assume that the story is about how Zacchaeus was seeking Jesus, but the closing statement of Jesus reminds us that it was actually Jesus who was seeking Zacchaeus.
- It is amazing how Jesus developed a reputation for “eating with sinners” who eventually turn their lives over to serving God. It makes one wonder if a) I ever intentionally engage with those far from God and b) if I do engage with those far from God, do I then point them to Christ?
- If you read the entire encounter, then you saw that Zacchaeus repented of his extortion and vowed to make restitution. Jesus then proclaimed that salvation had come to him. We should note that when sinful people admit their sin to Jesus in the gospels, Jesus celebrates and rejoices.

OBEDIENCE

In this encounter, Zacchaeus was welcomed by the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus. This experience of spending time with Jesus also caused him to recognize his own

sin which led Zacchaeus to take a bold step of obedience. As we encounter Jesus through this passage of scripture, let's look at some examples of how we can be obedient today.

- If we have wronged anyone, we should follow the example of Zacchaeus by repenting and seeking to make things right.
- There may be some obstacle that has kept you from encountering Jesus. For Zacchaeus, it was his height and the crowds. How can you seek to be creative and persistent in order to overcome that obstacle?
- Jesus stated that His mission was to "seek and to save the lost." How can you pray for and/or share the gospel to the lost people you know today?
- In this passage, Zacchaeus was seeking to see Jesus, and Jesus was intentionally scanning the crowds and the tree lines apparently for the lost sheep of Israel. During this time in our country, there are people poking their heads up in the tree line trying to get a glimpse of God. How can we, His church, be more aware and intentional to help them meet Jesus?

PRAYER

Father, thank You that You sought us out and freely gave us salvation! Forgive us of our sins and direct our hearts to make right the ways we have wronged others. Give us eyes to see those around us who are looking for the Hope found in Christ. Give us wisdom in how to share the good news of Jesus with those we know who are far from You. Lord, break down the obstacles in our path so that we may know You and be known by You. Provide for our needs today and strengthen those who are serving our community during this period of self-isolation. Seek and save the lost in our community and let us rejoice in your Great Name. Amen.